



STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEMBER/OFFICER REPORT

NAME OF ORGANISATION/BODY	Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee
DATE OF LAST MEETING ATTENDED	18 November 2020

BRIEF REPORT:

There were a number of update reports presented and one report for decision.

Gloucestershire Skills Agenda Update

Pete Carr of the GFirst LEP gave an update which covered information and signposting, apprenticeships, unemployment / redundancy support and digital and cyber skills. On information and signposting, the Gloucestershire Careers Hub was launched the same day: <https://www.gloscareershub.com/>. It is designed to bring together businesses and schools, and support young people and the schools and colleges they attend. The skills portal link is at: www.skillsportalglos.com.

This will all be underpinned by up-to-date data, centralised information and collaboration between providers to maximise the use of existing funding and resources and will seek additional resources as required. It will form a workstream of the Gloucestershire Skills Strategy monitored by the Gloucestershire Skills Advisory Panel (GSAP), of which Pete Carr, Cllr. Patrick Molyneux (GEGJC Chair) and Cllr. Steve Lydon are members, reporting to the GFirst LEP and the GEGJC.

Kings Quarter Regeneration Update

Jon McGinty and Ian Edwards of Gloucester City Council gave an update on the regeneration of the Kings Quarter in Gloucester. The presentation that they gave on 'The Forum' is attached.

Strategic Planning in Gloucestershire Update

Mike Dawson, CE of Tewkesbury BC, gave an update on the status of the county's local plans and Joint Core Strategy (JCS), and the levels of growth identified and being planned for within them, including major developments. Overall the plans identify the need for 61,500 new homes and 342 ha of employment land in the plan period to 2031.

The update also looked at the impact of proposed planning reforms and in particular the proposed standard methodology for assessing housing need, which would approximately double the amount of housing needed in the county and at the same time reduce the ability to deliver affordable housing by increasing the threshold to 40 or 50 new homes.



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A strategic planning framework for Gloucestershire is being taken forward through the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground between the 6 districts, County Council and GFirst LEP, which will be the first step in developing an agreed long-term view of growth in the county to help shape plans.

Gloucestershire Covid-19 Economic Recovery Planning Update

An update was given in respect of collaboration across Covid-19 economic recovery plans in the county, which the Senior Officer Group had been working on since the emerging plans were reviewed at earlier GEGJC meetings in July and September. Three areas of work were highlighted:

Skills

In addition to the Skills Portal reported above, skills activity includes investment from the Get Britain Building Fund:

- £4.48m for the Gloucestershire Applied Digital Skills Centre with Cirencester College
- £1.956m towards the Construction Education Centre with the KW Bell Group Ltd, Cinderford.

Visitor Economy

The LEP is co-ordinating the promotion of Gloucestershire as a leisure destination. Partners are working on a three-year Tourism Strategy to be funded by GCC and co-ordinated by the Visit Gloucestershire Partnership.

Lobbying

Lobbying Government for freedoms and flexibilities to bring vacant retail units back into use.

In addition, GCC's Road to Economic Recovery strategy was tabled. This is centred around three drivers of recovery:

- People, place and connectivity
- Skills and employment
- Infrastructure, economy and growth.

It sets out short, medium and long-term actions with progress to be measured against economic outcomes around the labour market, business and economic output.

GFirst LEP Update

Dev Chakraborty gave an update on Recovery activity including:



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- £11.3m for the LEP from the Getting Britain Building Fund for the projects identified at Cirencester College and in Cinderford above amongst many others
- The development of the Skills Portal (above)
- Growth Hub Network grants of £500k for businesses
- Inward investment team has switched focus to supporting existing foreign-owned businesses rather than attracting new ones
- Supporting the Public Health team by targeting businesses with key messages around the pandemic
- Think Gloucestershire campaign – staycation, supporting local shops and businesses, keeping business spend local and supporting local shops for Christmas shopping
- Visitor economy and tourism – 3-year tourism strategy (above)
- Survey of businesses to obtain data on current and future working patterns across the county in the light of the pandemic: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LSWQV5L>

An update on Gloucestershire Growth Deal progress and headlines was also given, which included:

- Berkeley GREEN – Gloucestershire Police have opened their new college and conference centre in the Sabrina Building
- Five Valleys – a new ANPR system is being installed in the multi-storey car park to enable monitoring and benchmarking of visitor usage.

Business Rate Pool including SEDC funding requests

Andrew Cummings' report covered three main points:

1. An update on the Business Rates Pool and the estimated balance. Mid-year monitoring shows an overall pool gain of £3.871m including a transfer of £774k to the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) administered by GEGJC, but as this may be subject to significant fluctuation due to the impacts of the pandemic, it was advised that this should not be factored into resource allocations at this point.
2. Noting the recommendation of the S151 Officers Group to continue with the Business Rates Pool having assessed the risks and carried out modelling.
3. Agreeing an allocation from the SEDF of £500k for core funding for the LEP. This is based on £250k pa of match funding to support the LEP's operating costs and allow it to draw down Government funding, for 2 years until the end of 2022/23. GEGJC agreed this.

FUTURE MEETINGS	10 March, 9 June, 15 September and 17 November 2021
REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Kathy O'Leary
DATE	1 December 2020